

CIA OPERATIONS CENTER

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The attached if from today's Star.

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Soviets Allegedly Got Spy Satellite Manual

By Anthony Marro
 Special to The Washington Star

A former CIA official arrested last week in Chicago allegedly sold Soviet agents a manual describing the workings of the so-called "Big Bird" satellite, which is used to spy on the Soviet Union, according to intelligence sources.

Several government sources said the ex-officer, William P. Kampiles, is accused of taking the manual from the CIA at a time when he was employed as a low-level official in 1977 and of later selling it to Soviet agents in Greece.

Justice Department officials are still trying to decide whether to seek an indictment against him for sale of classified material. A decision is expected before the end of the week.

THE SATELLITE, which has been in use for about five years, is said to be able to take photographs of Soviet missile silos, airfields and other military installations, and is generally considered an important source of intelligence about the Soviet Union.

It is not clear, however, just how valuable the manual could be to the Soviets. Several sources said today that the CIA considers the alleged sale of the manual a "very serious" matter. One Justice Department source, however, said that the information in the manual may be of less concern than the simple fact that a low-level officer was able to get access to it and that it could have been missing from the agency for so long without being discovered.

Kampiles, the son of Greek immigrants, was a GS-7 "watch officer" at the agency for about eight months, and routinely received and relayed classified information within the agency. By one account, he wanted to become an operations officer with the

CIA, but was told that he didn't have the aptitude for it.

An investigation was begun by the local field office of the FBI after the CIA turned over a letter it had received from the former employee saying he had made contact with Soviet agents in Greece and, by one account, suggesting that he might now be of help to the agency.

At the time it received this information, according to one intelligence source, the FBI already had some indication that the Soviets had obtained information about the "Big Bird" satellite, but did not know from where it had come.

It was not until after the FBI had questioned Kampiles and gone back to the agency to ask about the manual, according to one source, that the agency realized it was missing.

THE "BIG BIRD" satellites, which are launched from the West Coast, are said to be so sophisticated they can pick out small details of vehicles and persons on the ground.

Although Kampiles was arrested last week, a final decision still has not been made on whether to seek an indictment of him, although the expectation is that the Justice Department will make such a move. The reason for the delay, Justice Department sources said, is the inevitable concern in any such case that it might cause more harm to "national security" to prosecute because of the revelations about the material, and about access to it within the agency, that would have to be revealed in a trial.

The CIA refused official comment on the matter. "This is one we can't touch at all," said Herbert Henr, the agency's chief spokesman.

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Former CIA aide seized as spy

Washington Star

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